

EATEL

913 South Burnside Avenue
Gonzales, Louisiana 70737-4258
<http://www.eatel.com>



M. H. Czerwinski
President

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DEC 19 1997
FCC MAIL ROOM
December 16, 1997

96-45

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Room 222
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Sir:

In accordance with the requirements for Federal Universal Service funding, we are forwarding a copy of Louisiana Public Service Commission Order No. U-22759 dated November 6, 1997 designating East Ascension Telephone Company, Inc. as an eligible telecommunications carrier.

We have also enclosed an affidavit certifying that East Ascension Telephone Company, Inc. for the purpose of universal service support determination, meets the definition of a rural carrier.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

M.H. Czerwinski

President

:jsb

Enclosures (2)

No. of Copies rec'd
Date
OJH

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF LOUISIANA

PARISH OF ASCENSION

BEFORE ME, the undersigned Notary Public, personally came and appeared:

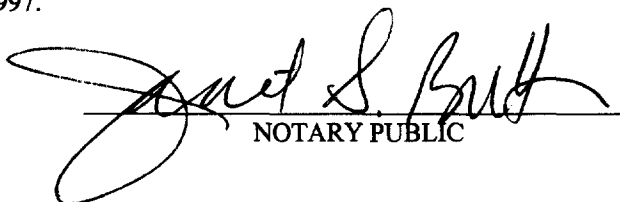
M.H. Czerwinski, President of East Ascension Telephone Company, Inc., who being first sworn by me, did depose and declare:

The Federal Communications Commission's Report and Order in Docket 96-45 released on May 8, 1997 requires that in order for the administrator to calculate and support payments, a carrier must notify the FCC and state Commission, that for purposes of universal service support determination, it meets the definition of rural carrier. I hereby certify that East Ascension Telephone Company, Inc. , 270429 Study Area Number, meets the definition of rural carrier pursuant to Section 3(37) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 based on the fact that East Ascension Telephone Company has less than 50,000 access lines.



M.H. Czerwinski
President
East Ascension Telephone Company, Inc.

Sworn to and subscribed before me in the Parish of Ascension, at Gonzales, Louisiana, this 16th day of December, 1997.


NOTARY PUBLIC



Louisiana Public Service Commission

POST OFFICE BOX 91154
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70821-9154

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LAWRENCE C. ST. BLANC
Secretary

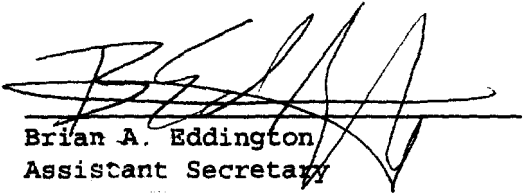
BRIAN A. EDDINGTON
General Counsel &
Assistant Secretary

(MRS.) VON M. MEADOR
Deputy Undersecretary

I, Brian A. Eddington, Assistant Secretary of the Louisiana Public Service Commission, do hereby certify that the hereto attached is a true and correct copy of the document described following:

ORDER NO. U-22759 (Decided at the October 22, 1997 Open Session)
Docket No. U-22759 - East Ascension Telephone Company (EATEL), ex parte.
In re: Exemption from the provision of toll limitation to qualified low income consumers and designation and certification as an eligible telecommunications carrier pursuant to 47 USC 214.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto officially signed my name and affixed the seal of the Louisiana Public Service Commission at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, this 21th day of November, 1997.


Brian A. Eddington
Assistant Secretary

In Re: Exemption from the Provision of Toll Limitation to Qualified Low Income Consumers and Designation and Certification as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier pursuant to 47 U.S.C. 214.

**ORDER NO. U-22759
(Decided at the October 22, 1997 Open Session)**

Section 254(e) of the Telecommunications Act mandates that a telecommunications carrier may not receive funds from the Federal Universal Service Fund after January 1, 1998, unless it is designated as an eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) under section 214(e) [of the Telecommunications Act] by the state public service commission.¹ 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(1) provides that only those carriers who offer and advertise *all* of the services supported by the Federal Universal Service Fund are eligible for ETC designation.²

However, 47 C.F.R. § 54.101(c) allows state commissions to grant requesting carriers additional time to complete any network upgrades that are necessary in order to provide single-party service, access to enhanced 911 service, or toll limitation, if exceptional circumstances warrant granting the additional time. Therefore, a carrier that does not currently provide these three services may receive universal service support, beginning January 1, 1998, for the duration of the period designated by the state commission while system upgrades are completed.

EATEL petitioned this Commission for certification as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier, without intervention. EATEL submitted an affidavit declaring that it provides all of the required universal services except toll limitation.³ EATEL requested additional time in order to upgrade its system to comply with this requirement.

This matter was brought before the Louisiana Public Service Commission at its Open Session on October 22, 1997. After discussion on the merits and a motion by Commissioner Dixon, seconded by Commissioner Sittig, the Commission unanimously voted to designate the above named carrier as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier. The Commission further voted to grant the carrier additional time to comply with the toll limitation requirement and that exceptional circumstances warranted the granting of additional time.

¹ 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(2) mandates that a state commission, upon its own motion or upon request, designate a common carrier, that meets the above requirements, as an eligible telecommunications carrier for a service area designated by the State commission.

² The supported services are: 1) Single-Party Service; 2) Voice Grade Access to the Public Switched Network; 3) DTMF Signaling or its functional equivalent; 4) Access to Emergency Services; 5) Access to Operator Services; 6) Access to Interexchange Service; 7) Access to Directory Assistance; 8) Access to Toll Limitation for qualifying low income consumers; and 9) Local Usage.

³ "Toll blocking" is a service provided by carriers that lets consumers elect not to allow the completion of outgoing toll calls from their telecommunications channel. "Toll control" is a service provided by carriers that allows consumers to specify a certain amount of toll usage that may be incurred on their telecommunications channel per month or per billing cycle. "Toll limitation" denotes both toll blocking and toll control. 47 C.F.R. § 54.400.

1. EATEL be designated as an eligible telecommunications carrier for the Dutchtown, French Settlement, Galvez, Gonzales, Maurepas, and Sorrento exchanges, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 214(e).
2. EATEL be granted an extension of time until December 31, 1998 to upgrade its system to provide toll limitation.
3. Exceptional circumstances warrant the granting of said extension of time.
4. This Order is effective immediately.

IT IS SO ORDERED

**BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA**

November 6, 1997

/S/ DON OWEN

DON OWEN, CHAIRMAN
DISTRICT V

/S/ IRMA MUSE DIXON

IRMA MUSE DIXON, VICE-CHAIRMAN
DISTRICT III

/S/ C. DALE SITTIG

C. DALE SITTIG, COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT IV

/S/ JAMES M. FIELD

JAMES M. FIELD, COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT II


SECRETARY

/S/ JACK "JAY" A. BLOSSMAN, JR.

JACK "JAY" A. BLOSSMAN, JR., COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT I